



# **TEAMWORK**

**A CORPORATE GUIDE**

**THE FIVE ASSURANCES**  
of a Functioning Team

**KEN W. EDMUNDSON**

*With* **DANNA HALLMARK**

**Guidance for Corporate America**  
**from Edmundson Northstar**

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**TEAMWORK**  
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“One measure of an idea’s brilliance is how obvious it seems in retrospect.”

\_\_\_ Unknown

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## **A Special Thanks**

Each time I complete something of this type, I am reminded of the important influence people provide me. As you will see from many of the stories in this book, my life has been a series of teamwork experiences. Many people deserve and have my appreciation for their aid in making this book possible. Several of my business colleagues have given me great insight to the entire manuscript.

I would like to acknowledge my mentors and close associates who demonstrate teamwork on a daily basis, and especially my family; my wife, Debbie, son, Todd, and daughters, Kellie, Rachel and Avery for their love, encouragement, and devotion to our teamwork together.

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However, this work would have never been completed without the prodding and constant kaizening and challenging of my associate, Danna Hallmark, a major contributor to this book.

I also want to acknowledge my personal performance coach, Steve Connor, who I also count as my friend and someone I recommend often to executives who want real professional guidance in their lives.

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# FORWARD

## **Building Your Company's Vision**

Jim Collins and Jerry Porras recently wrote an article, which was published in the *Harvard Business View*, called “Building Your Company’s Vision”, in which they retold a marvelous story of teamwork and why it is such a basic need in every area of our lives.

In the article they recounted a speech given by David Packard, one of the founders of Hewlett-Packard, to his employees in 1960. It hits directly on the core reason for an organization’s existence beyond just making money. I think you will see the power of teamwork in his comments:

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*“I want to discuss why a company exists in the first place. In other words, why are we here? I think many people assume, wrongly, that a company exists simply to make money. While this is an important result of a company’s existence, we have to go deeper and find the real reasons for our being. As we investigate this, we inevitably come to the conclusion that a group of people get together and exist as a team that we call a company so they are able to accomplish something collectively that they couldn’t accomplish separately – they make a contribution to society, a phrase which sounds trite but is fundamental ...you can look around (in the general business world) and see people who are interested in money and nothing else, but the underlying drives come largely from a desire to do something else: to join in teams, to make a product, to give a service - generally to do something which is of value.” David Packard 1960*

In the heart of every individual is the need to be a part of something – a team, to belong, to work, play, and rejoice with, or console and aid others who

give back the same in return. People seek this special bond in marriage, from family members, through church affiliations, club, fraternity, sorority, and lodge membership, as well as with colleagues, coworkers and peers in the business world.

Likewise, at the heart of every successful business, family or organization is a functioning team. Teams have existed since the very beginning. Show me a company or a family that understands teamwork, and I'll show you an organization or a family that is making a contribution in a meaningful way. It is true in your family, in your business, in the military, and it is true in sports. It will always be true because teamwork is a fundamental principle of life.

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## **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

The learning experience you are about to embark on is designed to refocus your thinking about teamwork. So, before you begin, you might want to record your present thoughts on teamwork, your feelings about working with a group, and the experiences you have had in the past and, therefore, how you feel about working as part of a team now. You can do that by taking a few minutes before you begin to mark the short questionnaire on page 117.

Reading this book might change your ideas about TEAMWORK. By capturing your thoughts and feelings before you begin, you can look back and use the exercise to evaluate just how differently you might feel later than you feel now. Recording your present feelings by completing the exercise now will also provide you with a gauge to refer to in the

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future when you review this book or share this information with a friend or co-worker.

# INTRODUCTION

I think you will find that this book on teamwork is quite different than any you have read in the past. It focuses on the subject from a totally different perspective. Here's how.

It's been my experience that it is impossible for me to accurately assess the actions or attitudes of members of a group or to know the actions or attitudes of other people. So, attempting to determine whether a group of people are working together as a team is impossible if you look at the group as a whole, or at any one member of that group -- unless the one member of that group you analyze is yourself.

A great quote from my friend John Miller, the creator and author of "QBQ, The Question Behind the Question", goes like this, "If you want to

improve your company, your team, your family or any other organization, then begin with yourself. Ask the question, “How can I get better? If I get better, the team gets better.” So, this teamwork guide is first and foremost about you, not the others.

I’ve found that, if you focus on yourself, on what you are feeling, whether you are comfortable or are uncomfortable with a person or a situation, only then can you make some assessment as to what you think about the team you are on, and conclude whether you are comfortable with other team members.

Your discomfort could come from within, from your own misgivings (baggage – head trash) or from without, from the actual actions of another team member. Realizing that you are uncomfortable, then discovering the basis of that discomfort are the

first steps to identifying any disfunction in the team you are on, in order to deal with it.

The assets of team members may vary, and one team may have more “talent” than another. But, aside from that, TEAMWORK is that aspect of a group of people that binds them together so they can work as one. If one person on a team has any discomfort with the project, the process, or any team decisions that will affect them or their department, they cannot fully act as a team member and, therefore, the team cannot function. A team is only a team when it is functioning – when each member experiences no feelings of discomfort -- when each member has what I call

### ***THE FIVE ASSURANCES.***

So, what is your reward for functioning as a team member if you don't have the usual opportunities a group offers, that is, to be the best

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performer of the group, to know more than anyone else in the group, or exhibit any other attributes that would otherwise point you out as an individual or as a champion, a hero, or a leader? The reward you will receive from being a member of a functioning team is that unique and incredibly satisfied feeling you get when you have contributed to something that is greater than you, and when your input has been considered in a plan that has accomplished more than you could ever accomplish alone. You get to experience that rush that comes when you know that others are equally committed to the same outcome as you are. You have the satisfaction of being responsible for a necessary and equal part of a whole that moved forward as one toward an objective. And you have the chance to rejoice with all those others who felt accountable for the end result. That is teamwork. That is camaraderie. And there is no feeling in the world like it.

My purpose, in this little book, is to show you how you can identify your own feelings, then to guide you to assessing those feelings to make sure you are comfortable with the team you are on, and, if you are not, to help you identify some ways to change that. I hope the tools in this book will make your life easier and more joyful.

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# **TEAMWORK**

## **PART I**

### **THE EQUAL STATUS MINDSET**

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# **OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES**

The fact that King Arthur used his famous round table to symbolize the concept of equality is well known. However, I didn't realize how universally the concept applied until the day my daughter, Rachel, taught me a "never to be forgotten" lesson in teamwork when she was only eleven years old.

Rachel was a bubbly, perceptive, fun-loving little girl, blonde and blue-eyed, without a care in the world, which made for great insights when she "connected all the dots" as she did this particular day. As I passed by our dining room one day, I overheard her and a friend in discussion about our large, rather formal dining room table. Her friend explained to Rachel while looking at our dining table, "We don't have a long table like that. We have a round table because my mom and dad say it makes

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for better family time.” That seemed cute and I was interested to hear Rachel’s reply, so, acting uninterested, I edged a bit closer to the conversation to hear Rachel’s response -- much to my dismay. “Oh,” she said, “If we had a round table, there would be no place for my dad to sit!”

I grasped the meaning clearly and quickly, although neither child realized she was talking about teamwork (she thought she was talking about the dining room table). But, being the corporate executive I was, I connected almost everything to a business philosophy or idea. Rachel was saying that her dad always had to sit at the head of the table in order for him to have the position of authority. Without delay, the following week I brought in a round table for the conference room at my office, and we placed a round table in our breakfast room at home.

It's a lesson I have never forgotten. From that day until this, each time I enter a boardroom and see the conference table, I hear Rachel's little voice, effectively keeping me in my place – at the round table.

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# **HOW TEAM MEMBERS TRADITIONALLY THINK OF A CORPORATE TEAM**

Corporate officers, department heads, and other peers more times than not form the idea of their role in, and importance to, the corporate organization by comparing data that either affects their department or is a result of their department's work, shown, maybe, in a bar chart, that illustrates rank, or in a pie chart as percentages of the whole. Criteria that are used to form this "chart in their heads" may be generated by various factors such as:

- Their share of the budget,
- The percentage of personnel that work in that particular department,
- The size or location of their office,
- Their seniority with the company, or
- Their personal or social relationship with the boss.

As long as a person holds the idea that their worth and importance to their company or to any group or team with which they work is connected to such criteria, each time those criteria change, they will have to change their view of themselves and their department to fit the current model.

On the one hand, budget changes or other factors that require that their department receive less money in a certain period of time might indicate to those in that department that the company considers them less important than before.

On the other hand, people who have been transferred from one company location to another might decide they are more important (or less important) to the corporation than they were in the past, depending on how they viewed their transfer and their new office compared to their old one, or what kind of reception they received upon arriving.

Forming and holding these impressions of worth derived from statistics that do not apply can lead to problems with personnel and within the team.

Legend has it that King Arthur seated his trusted knights (the members of his team, if you will) at a huge round table to demonstrate to them that they were all equal in his eyes, no matter how large their land holdings were, the number of children they had, their strength, appearance, their popularity or notoriety among any section of the populace, or other abilities or assets. Legend also has it that this method worked extremely well and fashioned a working team, bar none.

However, if King Arthur had seated his knights around his table, with each of their spaces allotted by any one or any number of other criteria, a gathering of the knights might look a little different. But, there was no “rank” among the Knights of King

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Arthur. They were equal solely because they were chosen by King Arthur to be a part of his team.



*A team with false impressions of their worth*

## **FALSE IMPRESSIONS OF STATUS CAN RESULT IN “CORPORATE DRAG”**

When members of a corporate team or working group do not feel they have equal status, their behavior will reflect feelings such as suspicion and insecurity and may result in **CORPORATE DRAG**. **Corporate Drag** is a phrase I coined several years back to express how any corporation can lose momentum if all factors are not working in unison toward the same outcome. Here’s how that goes:

“**DRAG**” is a word that is used to identify the result of any interference with the forward movement of a body, such as the drag a ship experiences from rust, barnacles or other unnecessary protrudence or baggage that might catch water on its surface or give the ship more bulk

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or weight and act as an obstacle to its forward movement. Aircraft can experience “**DRAG**” from such factors as ice buildup on the wings, overload or unbalanced load and so forth – anything that causes that craft to be less aerodynamic.

I’m sure you have all experienced “**DRAG**” when you were attempting to pull your brother or sister in a toy wagon and wondered why it was so difficult, just to find they were scraping their foot along the ground behind them. Any substance, situation or obstacle that causes loss of forward momentum can be termed “**DRAG**”. Therefore, ***CORPORATE DRAG*** is that phenomenon that results when the corporate vision, projects or agenda is waylaid or slowed down by factors that aren’t necessary or supportive to their forward movement.

The results of ***CORPORATE DRAG*** can be detected in the actions and reactions of employees and personnel and can prevent a group from working as a team. Examples are:

- Protective actions geared to prevent “loss” of any territory or funds,
- Resentment of suspected favoritism of one department over others,
- Fear that the needs of a “smaller” department may not be met,
- Disinterest in the process,
- Little interest in bringing new people up to speed,
- An unhealthy competitive environment between departments,
- Lack of interest in getting to know other department heads,
- No friendly “how’s it going” visits between departments,

- Loss of trust between individuals and departments,
- Lack of commitment to the corporate objective,
- Diminishing results,
- An “every man for himself” attitude.

Lack of an “**EQUAL STATUS MINDSET**” -- the round table, if you will, prevents individual members of a team or group from working in harmony and can slow down or even eliminate any forward momentum of even the strongest teams. That is what I call “**CORPORATE DRAG**”.

## **THE REALISTIC VIEW OF A FUNCTIONING CORPORATE TEAM**

In reality, a corporate team that is chosen to work together to move a company forward can be easily illustrated as equal participants, much as each knight was equal while sitting at King Arthur's round table. And, like King Arthur's chosen knights, each member of a corporate team is an equal participant and partner in all things concerning the projects, objectives, processes, and outcomes of that team.

Other attributes that each person has such as the differences in size of department, notoriety, seniority, and number of subordinates, to name a few, do not enter in. There is no feeling of rank among the members of a functioning team. Therefore, the needs, ideas, concerns, and input of each team member are equally important, although

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they must mesh together harmoniously in the center of the table to meet the needs of the company.

The function of a TEAM is to pool each member's different talents and strengths together – each person concentrating on and improving what he does best to work toward the same objective – a goal. In sports, that goal is typically to win a game, or a season, or a championship.

The purpose of a corporate TEAM is no different than that of a sports team, to utilize and “bounce off of” each other's strengths and talents to maintain maximum momentum, while moving the company toward the chosen objective -- to pull together toward that objective.



*Team members who feel equal*

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## A MATTER OF SURVIVAL

If the various members of a NASCAR team were seated around King Arthur's round table, with space at the table allotted according to the notoriety each receives in the press or among fans, the round table might look like that pictured on the next page.

But, when drivers are barreling down the track at life-threatening speeds, do they consider themselves more important than, say, the pit crew member who just changed the right rear wheel a few seconds ago?

**How do you think they see the round table?**  
How important do you think one crewmember's input and contributions is to them compared to another?



*NASCAR team according to notoriety and press*

How safe do you think drivers would feel if they thought that one member of their team felt shy about speaking up at team meetings on subjects that concerned the safety and performance of the car because they didn't feel their input was as important as someone else's who had been on the team longer – that they didn't feel “**equal**” to the other team members?

Racing drivers have to know the meaning of real TEAMWORK. They depend on their pit crew for their very life. They must have total trust in them.



When they race they have to have complete **ASSURANCE** that all members of the crew (team):

- Know they are an equal participant on the team,
- Know their particular job is equally vital to the survival of the driver and the car,
- Know their input is equally important and necessary for everyone else in the crew, and
- Are doing their jobs at the top of their game.

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

So... Why do successful sports teams seem to work, while corporate teams remain notorious for being dysfunctional?

Winning teams in other arenas function so well together because the team members **know** each other. Each member of a functioning team has about as much personal knowledge of each other member of the team (the talents, hopes, plans, families, fears, weaknesses, and needs of the others) as they have knowledge of the overall goal of the team.

Members of a winning sports team understand, support, and appreciate the efforts, the trials, the problems, the joys and sorrows of each other member of the team. They like each other. They enhance the lives of other team members.

They know when they can lean on another member or whether they need to help them out. They see the other members of the team other times than just at practice and game time. Their lives are intertwined. They “hang out” together. Their families know each other. They gladly attend and participate in team events such as outings, banquets, and picnics, as well as personal events in the lives of the other players and their families. They collaborate on community and charity work.

If any member of a sports team fails to understand or feel comfortable with this concept, it soon shows. He or she becomes a detriment to the team. If the coach, trainer, team leader, or owner wants to improve the team, they have to deal with the issue by either bringing that player into line – or getting rid of them. **It’s just that simple!**

The news media is quick to report most schisms within well-known sports teams for one reason – it has great sensation value, largely because they expect more sensationalism to occur as a result of that schism. They know that, typically, detrimental changes are liable to occur in the team structure, team management or team ownership because of such rifts.

And so it can occur with any type of team, whether it be in the boardroom, clubhouse, family, or any affiliation. One member of that team can cause the entire team to “**DRAG**” simply by not knowing or understanding other members.

However, the better team members know each other, the closer they are, and the less likely they are to misunderstand the needs, motives, and everyday situations occurring in others’ lives. It’s this misunderstanding from lack of knowledge that

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causes the feelings of suspicion and insecurity, which lead to schisms within teams.

But yet, in many corporate settings, the key people (members of the teams that are most vital to the company) who have been carefully screened and chosen to work together to move the company forward – the A-Team, as it were, might see each other only at meetings and mandatory seminars.



**"I like to end these meetings with a group hug,  
if you'll step out of the cubicles."**

This is comparable to only showing up for practice and for the game. In many corporate settings people have no contact except at work – and very little then. The larger the corporation, it seems, the more prevalent this problem is.

In order to function as a team, each member of a corporate group needs to have not only a knowledge of each other member's personal wants and needs, but they also need to be familiar with other aspects of their corporate life such as:

- How their department functions,
- How they deal with problems such as budget, and personnel,
- How they work with or overcome those problems,
- How they envision themselves in the company,
- How they see the company changing in the future.

Only with knowledge of the wants, needs, strengths and weaknesses of your other corporate peers can you know when you can call on them and when you need to back them up.

If you know why fellow department managers need a morning off (to close their new house purchase or attend their child's school function), you can accommodate them and still get what you need from them by adjusting your schedule to fit theirs such as working a little late with them to finish a project the night before. However, if you know nothing of their home life, you might become alarmed, and feel that they wanted you to "fill in" while they slacked off.

Communications is one of the most important aspects of a functioning team, the lack of which can create misunderstandings, ill feelings and, ultimately, increase ***CORPORATE DRAG.***

Getting to know other team members is very important in any situation, but, when your team is scattered throughout more than one city, or state, or continent, as is many times the case today, it becomes even more essential that every member make an effort to know what's going on in the lives of their fellow members.

For example: George and Debra were team members who had been working fairly closely on the development of certain company training material. They lived in different locations and worked mostly by email and phone. Each seemed to have better than average regard for the talents, ideas and potential of the other. However, at one point during a development project George lost communication with Debra. He tried for several weeks to contact Debra by leaving messages by phone or email. But, all the contact George seemed to be able to grab were quick snatches of time with Debra on the

phone between her other activities. This was not the quality time George thought he needed from his partner on such an important project, and was far different from the friendly and effective phone meetings he had grown accustomed to in the past.

After a certain amount of time George concluded from the evidence he saw that Debra must have lost interest in the project. From George's point of view, Debra's inattention to his needs and the time schedule was preventing him from accomplishing his goals and completing his work. At one point George emailed Debra a message in which he stated that he felt that she was not holding up her part of the agreement, that he was being delayed in finishing his contract because of her non-compliance. He stated, "Evidence indicates that you haven't felt responsible for your part of the project in quite some time."

At the point of receiving this message, Debra fired back a heated email saying that she had some serious health problems arise and required surgery during the last month, and had other schedules she had to make, and that, if George couldn't work with her schedule then they would have to find some other way to do things. She continued, "I understand you do not like interacting with my schedule and it appears you draw conclusions from my not calling."

When you step back and look at each of these two team members, you can see that neither had stopped working toward the common goal. Neither had lost interest in the project. However, one important element was missing in their relationship. That element was communication. These two partners had lost contact with the personal wants, needs, hopes, and happenings of the other.

This lack of communication had already caused what Debra had mentioned in her message, “this type of distraction” – ***CORPORATE DRAG***. This entire occurrence could have been prevented by one simple act on the part of each of these two team members:

- George could have tried harder to contact Debra, calling her at home if necessary, or contacting mutual friends or associates within the company if he felt confused by her change of behavior. He could have explained his feelings (even in email form) while he was feeling them, not after he had already drawn conclusions from the insufficient data he had. At that point Debra (or her assistant) could have explained the situation. Then George could have accommodated her hectic schedule, maybe taken on some of her work,

and, in general, kept the momentum of the project going.

- Debra could have made certain that her assistant had the responsibility to contact those she was actively working with when situations occurred that made it difficult for her to communicate or fulfill her commitments. Then George would not have been as apt to form conclusions and take erroneous actions because of those conclusions.

If George or Debra had been working in the same building or in the same city, there is a great possibility that he would have known about Debra's considerable health problems (by office rumor if nothing else). He might have even visited her during that time, gone to her office (or her home) to see if he could assist her, or sent a card. But, in this example, as in many instances in today's business

world, physical communications is not always possible. Therefore, it becomes extremely important that each team member communicate to the others their situations, setbacks, and even their excitement and elations.

When there is a lack of appropriate information, a person will draw conclusions from the data they have, based on their own past experience. On one hand, George had become frustrated and concluded that Debra had lost interest in their project. On the other hand, Debra was so distracted in the whirlwind of her own problems, that she didn't have the time to worry about what George was thinking during that time. Although this pattern of behavior is all understandably part of the human element, it can result in misunderstanding and **CORPORATE DRAG**, and can easily be the cause of schisms in a team or splits between partners.

Had communications remained current, George might have been able to fill in for Debra, bounce ideas off of her, or go on with his part of the project in some way, maybe changing his focus to “mesh” with a possible new schedule or deadline. But, as it was, the project stopped.

However, after the exchange of these two email messages George said to himself, “My gosh! I wish she had told me. I might have been able to help, rather than to add to her problems.” And Debra said to herself, “Well, how was he to know? I can see how he might figure that my interest had waned, or I was avoiding him, because I’ve become more distant lately with all this health trouble. But I wish somehow he had known.”

Had the two team members not been so committed to the actual project, this might have caused permanent damage, rather than a small

setback. Had either team members been focused on themselves, rather than on the project, there might have been a rift in the company and the breakup of two important team members who were actually great friends.

One of the keys to functioning comfortably on a team is to get to know the other members of that team. As you get to know someone, you begin to have interest in them. From that interest, comes a deeper understanding of what makes that person tick. That deeper knowledge of that person leads to a genuine regard for their lives and health, and that of those close to them. When you begin to care about them, barriers begin to disappear and you feel comfortable with them. When you are comfortable with a person, you feel equal to them. This is what I mean when I say you have the ***EQUAL STATUS MINDSET***.

And, only when you have the ***EQUAL STATUS MINDSET*** can you relax and commit to the same projects and outcomes as they do. That is when you become parts of the same functioning TEAM.

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# THE PURPOSE OF A TEAM AND HOW IT FUNCTIONS

A corporate TEAM is typically a carefully chosen group of persons, gathered to work together to move a company forward.

This group can only function as a TEAM when they have certain knowledge of the other members that result in confidence that all other team members are competent in their job and are doing their job at the best of their ability.

Only then can they relax and concentrate on their contribution to the team. Only then can they focus on what they do best.



*Only then can they relax and concentrate on their job.*

The phenomenon of teamwork is no secret to farmers, ranchers, and anyone who occasions to harness the power of animals for work or recreation. This is demonstrated very clearly by the work of the Anheuser-Busch Clydesdale team, the most famous Clydesdale hitch in the world. To qualify for one of the traveling hitches, an Anheuser-Busch Clydesdale must be a gelding, at least four years old, 18 hands (six feet tall), weigh between 1,800-2,000 pounds, be bay in color and have four white stocking feet, a blaze of white on the face and a black mane and tail.

Teams of ten Clydesdales travel together as a team hitch; eight Clydesdales are hitched together to pull the wagon, and two travel as alternates. The physical ability of each horse determines its position in the hitch. Wheelhorses (the pair closest to the wagon) must be large and strong enough to start the wagon's movement and use

their weight to help slow or stop the vehicle. The Body (second position) and Swing (third position) pairs must have the right mixture of strength and agility to turn the wagon. The Leaders (the pair in front, farthest from the wagon) must be the fastest and most agile pair.

One lesson in teamwork here is that one wheelhorse alone can pull 4,000 pounds, but when put together, two wheelhorses together can pull 24,000 pounds. Oh, the power of TEAMWORK.

This is phenomenal in itself, but, without the ability of the Swing pair to turn the hitch, or the Lead pair to guide the movement of the hitch, or the Body to hold it all in symmetry, the phenomenal pulling ability of the wheelhorses would not complete the job – and that job is to

represent with incredible beauty and strength the Anheuser-Busch Corporation.

Each hitch of Anheuser-Busch Clydesdales can accomplish this job only when each horse physically feels, in the traces, that all other team members are competent in their job and are doing their job at the best of their ability.

If any one of the Clydesdale hitch begins to fidget or act up in his traces, that signals to the handler that he is uncomfortable in his situation. When one horse shows discomfort, the handler knows the cause of that discomfort can originate anywhere along the huge hitch. He knows that, if any of the eight horses are experiencing uneasiness, pain, or difficulty, it can send waves of discomfort, up and down the hitch, to any other horse in the team.

The driver and handlers also know that, if, say, a wheelhorse decided to try to swing the team in some direction, or a Swing horse decides he wants to lead, it can have disastrous results, bringing the demonstration to a halt and, possibly, injuring horses. Therefore, if the driver or handler senses any discomfort in a horse, he takes the time, right then, to either find the source of that discomfort and rectify it or, if the source can't be found, replace that horse with a substitute, immediately. Oh, the delicate precision of TEAMWORK.

## VITAL TO YOUR EXISTENCE

To function as a team member, you need to **realize** that your contribution is vital to the existence of each of the other members!

To function as a team member, you need to **remember** that the contribution of each of the other members is vital to your existence!

For example, consider that you are head of sales at a certain company. You represent the entire sales force at the “roundtable” -- on the specific team you are a part of. Your job and the job of all of those you represent is to sell the company product. Now, picture your department having to exist without each of these other departments:

- **Technology:** Without the technology division, you might find that what you are selling isn't the latest innovation, or has been replaced by

new technology. You won't last long at the top of your game if the technology division doesn't stay on top of its game.

- **Accounting:** Without the accounting/finance department, there is no method in place to collect the money from the sales, enter it into the system and make sure the company gets paid and you and your people get your commissions. You'll run out of money without the accounting/finance department coming to work and counting the beans.
- **Customer Service:** Without the customer service staff, customer input, both good and not so good, would not be funneled to you so you can make the appropriate changes in your department to improve things or give credit where it is due. You won't get any feedback without customer service on the phones.
- **Shipping and Receiving:** Without the receiving crew, you might run out of

something to sell, or, if you sold something, you might not have it to ship out. Without the shipping department, your orders might never reach their promised destination.

On one of the first jobs I held I met Bill, a middle-aged man who worked the receiving dock of the small company warehouse. His position seemed a little unglamorous to me, sitting by the loading dock door, in his little folding chair, day after day. But, as I got to know Bill I learned how seriously he took his job – and how important he actually was to the company.

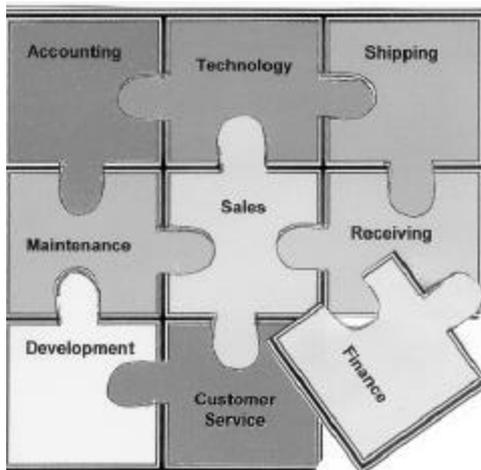
Bill showed me the many ways he could lose money for the company. For instance, if he didn't report a broken shipment the company would have to eventually reorder the merchandise and, if it were after the allotted time, the company would have to foot the bill for the replacements as well as pay for

the unreported broken shipment. And, if he didn't pull a purchase order when a shipment came in, it would cause confusion in the accounting department and that confusion could trickle all down through the company if sales persons thought it was still on order, or if the buyer inquired about the shipment with the supplier, or if the company agreed to pay shipping to a customer because they had to back order it – and it was sitting on the shelf the whole time.

Bill taught me that he could actually lose as much money for that company as it could make in any given day. He knew that company couldn't function for long unless he did his job at the top of his game. And he did it that way. He had the ***EQUAL STATUS MINDSET***. He was a real functioning team member.

You see, when you consider it, no department or division can actually exist without each of the other departments or divisions. So, which department is the most important? Sales? Technology? Accounting? Customer Service? Shipping? How about Design? Marketing? All are equally important to the survival of the company – and to the survival of each of the others.

**You depend on each member of your team to survive. And the corporation depends on each TEAM member to be complete.**



Ken W. Edmundson

# **TEAMWORK**

## **PART II**

### **THE ASSURANCES OF A TEAM**

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# THE ASSURED TEAM

**So, how do you know when a team is functioning as a team and when it is not?**

When you (or any member of your team) know you have **EQUAL STATUS** with and importance to the team, regardless of how a chart might look according to the size of your department, the amount of the budget you command, your seniority in the company, or other criteria, -- that your input is vital to the successful outcome of the purpose of that team, you will automatically exhibit unmistakable evidence of

## **ASSURANCE**

To fully function as a team member you must feel assured in two ways:

- **ASSURED of yourself:** You must feel assured of your equal role and equal

importance to the team and in the team process.

- **ASSURED by others:** You must feel assured that each other team member is showing equal commitment to the team and the same understanding of the team process as you are.

My use of the word “**ASSURANCE**” is not a random choice when I write of TEAMWORK. The idea of “assurance”, or being assured, is one of the most powerful concepts in our language. When people have **ASSURANCE** they experience a feeling of boldness, and confidence. They will have freedom from doubt. They will exhibit self-confident, and will feel a guarantee that what they envision, picture, expect, need or want is either available or forthcoming. They will feel secure in their position. And a TEAM with every member

assured in all these aspects will be dynamic and unstoppable.



Consider exactly who the people are on the team with whom you most interact. Perhaps it is a group of peers from within your department or division, or maybe colleagues who are of equal standing in responsibility for other divisions or departments.

Usually it will be the people you regularly depend on to cooperate with you in the most meaningful way in order for you to enjoy the greatest success. It should also include the person or persons that you report to on a daily basis.

Let's pause here a moment and have some fun with an exercise. With those thoughts in mind,

take few minutes to read the following statements that describe feelings and reactions to situations having to do with working with a team. Indicate how often you have to deal with each of those situations by placing a number from 0 to 5 in the blank to the right of the statement. Grade the extent of your reaction to each statement by the following scale:

0	<b>Never:</b> You never run across the situation.
1	<b>Seldom:</b> The situation rarely occurs (once or twice a year).
2	<b>Occasionally:</b> The situation occurs often enough to be noticeable (semi-monthly or, maybe, on each project).
3	<b>Regularly:</b> You notice the situation happening on a regular basis where you might be wary of it at certain times.
4	<b>Often:</b> It seems the situation might occur on any given day.
5	<b>Always:</b> You've come to expect it.

Statement	Enter number 0 - 5
1. I have difficulty getting on the agenda of a meeting.	
2. Some people couldn't care less if another department is having trouble fulfilling its part in a project.	
3. I think some of the group decisions are made around the water cooler.	
4. When I make a proposal, they don't seem to understand what I'm trying to say. It's like their brain is somewhere else.	
5. They don't get all the facts about an issue.	

6. When a project is in trouble, some people start looking for someone else to blame, instead of pitching in to rectify the problem.	
7. If another department is slow or fails in their delivery date, some people use that as an excuse to slack off in their department.	
8. I'm always asked to submit my request in written detail.	
9. It's like no one cares about anyone else – every dog for himself.	
10. Other members of the team sometime focus on their own goals, more than on the company's overall goals.	
11. I think they sometimes just give lip service to my input.	

12. When projects get into trouble, I've seen other members of the team leave like rats on a sinking ship.	
13. From time to time it seems some people just go through the motions on a project.	
14. Sometimes there seems to be a lot of grumbling when members of the team are leaving the meeting room.	
15. There are those who have never read the company's mission statement.	
16. There are times when I don't think everyone completely agrees when a decision is made.	
17. I don't think some members read all the requests that come in.	

18. They don't take time to fully go over each point before they make a decision.	
19. Many times I feel that my department has been imposed upon in decision-making.	
20. I have trouble getting my point across.	
21. Some people seem to have no enthusiasm for the success of the company.	
22. Some departments never want input from others.	
23. By the time they get around to me, the points I want to make seem petty.	

24. I sometime see very little enthusiasm about a project. we've decided needs our attention.	
25. Even after a pep talk, some departments settle back into taking care of their own problems without a thought for the company goals.	

**Compare these values with the key on page 123.**



***THE FIVE ASSURANCES*** you will have if you are a member of a functioning team are:

1. That you are equally **HEARD**,
2. That your input and needs are equally **CONSIDERED**,
3. That you are comfortable that all other team members seem equally **COMMITTED** to the project,
4. That you feel that all others are equally **RESPONSIBLE** for their role in the outcome of the project,
5. That you are comfortable that all others are acting equally **ACCOUNTABLE** for the success of the entire project and of the company.

# ***ASSURANCE OF YOURSELF***

1.  
***ASSURANCE*** that you will be  
equally **HEARD**.

If you are a member of a functioning team, you will feel sure that each other member of the team is listening to your input, not to respond to your statements or to defend their position, but in order to understand your point. You will be sure that, after you have done your “home work”, and have presented your needs, wants, comments and suggestions in a clear and logical manner, they will be accepted and treated as valuable and will be fully considered for their own merit, as well as in the larger picture.

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You will feel comfortable speaking at meetings and know that what you say is important to the other team members.

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**"Profits are down, foreign competition is up,  
and someone's sticking gum under the chairs!"**

## 2.

**ASSURANCE** that your input will be equally **CONSIDERED**.

If you are a member of a functioning team, you will feel sure that when you present data in a discussion, it will be balanced against equally factual data from others in an atmosphere of unity of process and an understanding of each other's needs and concerns.

You will feel sure that every team member has been **heard** and that all possible data has been **considered** before the team makes a decision that will affect your department – that each member has **heard** and **considered** all the evidence with the entire company outcome in mind, and is ready to hold to a plan of action.

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You will be sure that factual data, only, has been employed to make any decisions that affect you.



"I want my ideas called 'concepts', not 'notions'."

## ***ASSURANCE BY OTHERS***

### 3.

***ASSURANCE*** that each other TEAM member will be equally **COMMITTED** to the same goal.

If you are a member of a functioning team, you will feel sure that all other team members have the same focus as you have, on the company objective, rather than on their own turf – that they are working full-out toward the same result that you are.

You will feel comfortable that each team member has **heard** and **considered** the input of each other member, understands the decisions and objectives of the team project, and is equally **committed** to following through to its completion.



"Henry, you are undermining the R&D team's confidence."

When I think of the concepts of **COMMITMENT** (which I have just introduced) and **RESPONSIBILITY** (which I will discuss next), my thoughts go immediately to a childhood friend of mine, Don White. The last time I saw Don was when I was in the ninth grade, just before he moved away.

As kids, Don and I played on the same peewee football team in the Florence, Alabama city league. While the games certainly were not ESPN or sports.com headliners, it was the most important team in the most important football league in the world because it was our team, and we took it very seriously. We had such ferocious names as the Red Team, the Yellow Team, the Blue Team, and Don and I played on the mighty White Team, nothing to do with his name, just jersey color.

We had played together for three years (in the 10-12 year old league) and by his twelfth summer Don had grown a lot, as boys that age typically do. When we gathered for the start of our fall practices, it looked like we could all fit into our uniforms just fine for one more year -- in our last year of football at that level, except for Don. His extra growth spurt over the summer prevented him from fitting into any of the regular uniforms. But he was finally outfitted. Through a lot of searching a uniform was discovered that was large enough for him ...but it was close.

This was also the year our White Team was determined to finally beat the ferocious Blue Team, made up of the kids from the “wrong side of town”. We were after the city championship, no holds barred! I remember as the season marched on and we began winning and the Blue Team began winning, it looked like another year where there

would be a showdown between the undefeated White Team and the undefeated Blue Team for the city championship.

In school Don was a fairly quiet, gentle giant of a boy. I liked Don, and I particularly liked him on my team because he always did his part. He was an important part of our defensive and offensive line. Little did I know, however, just how **committed** Don was to our team's winning the city championship and how **responsible** he felt about his part.

As the season moved on and we continued to win games, Don's value on the team showed as he played one good game after another. But unfortunately, as the year previously had seemed to end, at the final showdown, the Blue Team again beat us badly in the city league championship for the third year in a row.

As was the custom at the end of the last game, we were required to turn our uniforms in to the coaches who would return them to be stored at the city recreation department for next year's teams. As we turned in our uniforms for the final time of peewee football, knowing the following year we would be promoted to middle school, I was drawn to a commotion around Don. The coaches were gathering around him where it appeared that there was some great level of concern. They were holding his uniform and helmet and talking to him in somewhat of a serious, but what I gathered was a curious tone. As I moved closer, I heard the conversation unfold as Don began to describe what he had done.

Don said when they could not find a uniform to fit him, and because there was such a spectacle made of how much he had grown over the year, it really embarrassed him, and since he wanted so badly to fit

in and feel a part of the team, he never mentioned that his helmet did not fit him any better than his uniform. He was afraid that if they couldn't find a helmet for him, he might not be able to play. So, unbeknown to anyone, Don went home the night that the uniforms were issued and removed all of the webbing from inside his helmet so he could get it on his head comfortably. And, yes, Don played the entire year on both offensive and defensive lines with a helmet that was not much more protection than if he had worn a plastic bag over his head.

I use the story of Don White to illustrate, not a lesson in personal safety or smart thinking (his actions weren't the wisest, smartest or safest), but as an illustration of someone who, in his simplicity, pushed aside his own needs and showed a high level of **COMMITMENT** and **RESPONSIBILITY** to his team. Don White's actions were some of the greatest example of TEAMWORK I had ever seen,

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and I have not forgotten it to this day. Thank you,  
Don, for those lessons.

## 4.

**ASSURANCE** that each other TEAM member feels equally **RESPONSIBLE** for their role in the success of the TEAM project.

If you are a member of a functioning team, you will know that each team member is committed to remaining steadfast to the chosen agenda and objective, including the time frame, budget, schedule, personnel sharing or any other temporary changes that were agreed upon in order to reach the target as a team. You will feel comfortable in the knowledge that they feel **RESPONSIBLE** for their actions, as well as the actions of other members of their group.

Evidence of each team member's feelings of **RESPONSIBILITY** to a team project can be seen

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in their continued show of interest in, not only their role in the project, but in the project as a whole. Team members who feel **RESPONSIBLE** will “self-start”, remain enthusiastic, and check in with other departments to see how their own performance is affecting all other participants.

5.

**ASSURANCE** that each other TEAM member feels equally **ACCOUNTABLE** for the total outcome of the TEAM project.

If you are a member of a functioning team, you will be sure that each other team member feels **ACCOUNTABLE** for the success of any team project you are working on. That they feel comfortable with sharing equally the disappointment if the objective isn't met – and feel just as confident that they will share equally in the joys and celebrations when the project is completed successfully.

Evidence of feeling **ACCOUNTABLE** can be seen when other team members take an interest in how your department is doing and make

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themselves and their resources available to you if you need them.

Their feeling of **ACCOUNTABILITY** ensures that each team member will be on the alert for both their own actions and those of other members that show a lowering of commitment to the process, a lessening of responsibility, or a loss of momentum toward the decided outcome.



Each member of a functioning team will also be on the alert for evidence that another team member needs some back up help, much as the partners in doubles tennis back each other up.

In doubles tennis, one partner plays “net” and the other plays “back”. “Net” is played extremely close to the net that separates the partners’ court from that of their opponents. The “net” player’s initial job is to return any ball that is within reach, either a close-in, easy “lob” that just clears the net, or any other shot that can effectively be returned. The athlete playing “back” works mainly in the rear of the court. That player’s initial job is to return any long or high ball that is out of the reach of the partner playing “net”.

Here’s where doubles tennis partners show **ACCOUNTABILITY** for the successful outcome of a game. Although the athlete playing “net” feels

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**responsible** for returning any ball that he is able to return effectively, yet the partner playing “back” is continuously positioning to be able to deal with any ball that the “net” partner is unable to handle – even though, technically, it might have been a “net” **responsibility**. The partner playing “back” feels **ACCOUNTABLE** for the total outcome of the game. Also, the “net” player shows **accountability** when hustling to return a ball that might technically be considered a backcourt shot, in an attempt to render an element of surprise to the opponent.

## **LESSONS FROM THE SANDLOT**

Working in harmony with other members of a team, giving of your best talents to drive toward a goal, in whatever capacity you find yourself, is not a difficult feat to accomplish. In fact, if you spent your childhood years, as I did, hanging out with neighborhood kids and getting up a game of baseball or other sport as often as you could, fitting into a team and playing full-out at whatever capacity the particular team you landed on that day required of you became a necessity if you wanted to play very long with the gang. Here's why.

Typically a game of, say, baseball would begin when enough kids managed to escape from chores and other necessary evils in their day to meet in a favorite vacant lot, or, in my case, on the playground of the nearest grade school. When there were enough to play a game (which could be from as few

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as three kids – in which case we would play “flyers and grounders”, to many more over the amount needed – in which case we would flood the outfield with the extras), and sides were chosen, it was quickly and easily decided who would play what positions on a team. The specific talent and skill of each member of the “team of the day” dictated the position that each would play. Even if you were the new kid, it was soon well known in the neighborhood what you were “good at”.

Now, here’s the deal about sandlot teamwork. No matter what team you landed on, you wanted that team to win. You gave your best to produce that outcome. And your “best” was playing where you could be the most valuable to that outcome—and not necessarily in the position that looked the “coolest”.

For instance, team “captains” tried to get the fastest and strongest kids on their team, but also had a care for the various positions those they chose would have to fill. The team needed some good hitters, of course. But it also needed fast outfielders that weren’t afraid of the ball, and a sure-handed first baseman that could stand their ground when a runner was trying to intimidate them by running over them. A team needed someone who could pitch, someone who could scoop up grounders, and so forth.

But, typically, your position on the team you were on that day was decided by not only your own talents and abilities, but by the needs of the team as a whole. For example, if you were a great first baseman (a position that required very little running), but you could also run, and, on that particular day one of the outfielders had a sore foot that made it difficult to run, you would change places with them

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without blinking an eye. You filled your temporary position with the same enthusiasm you showed at your favorite position and gave it all you had. You wanted your team to win -- simple as that. You also knew instinctively that if you didn't play your best you would be looked on as a "spoilsport" and, in due time, you wouldn't be asked to play any more. It was an unwritten rule -- the rule of the team. You either played for your team, or you weren't asked to play. No pouting. No whining.

To be known as a team player, each kid had to remain committed to the game, no matter how dull it became out in left field. Even if you were picking clover or playing with the neighborhood dog, when a ball was hit your way, you had to be ready to deal with it. It was as simple as that. That was the rule of the team.

If you became angry and quit in the middle of a game, the word got out. No one wanted you on their team. You were the last to be picked out of the lineup – if you were chosen at all.

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## **SO, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH KIDS TODAY?**

So, what was the result of all of that sandlot teamwork? A study of the biographies of some of the builders of the largest and most workable companies in the past half century might reveal where all that sandlot teamwork went – into building a winning team of grown-up kids that loved their work, loved their company and worked, full-out, to get that company off the ground and fulfill that company's mission in whatever capacity they could most effectively contribute, in whatever situation they found themselves.

You can also see the results of that sandlot teamwork if you look at the lives of some names in sports history from the era that has recently past. I remember a dynamite basketball team with a sandlot mentality that played for the Arkansas Razorbacks in

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the 1970s under coach Eddie Sutton. One factor that contributed heavily to their amazing ability to work together was that many of the players had grown up and played together in the neighborhoods of the same middle-sized Arkansas town and had carried that “rule of the team” they had been exposed to there with them when they enrolled at UofA.

Their game was a pleasure to behold. It was in the old “Eyes it, skys it, and buys it” era. The team was so well oiled that it seemed that, when they had possession of the ball, they moved down the court as one harmonious whole and without much ado, someone would score. And the fans didn’t care who. After every score the Hog Wild Band would blast out with an ear-shattering version of “The William Tell Overture” at which time the bandleader would sprint to the top of Barnhill Arena and run the circumference of the bleachers and back in time

to conduct the last strains of the music. Then the fans would cheer him with as loud an uproar as any player had received. They cheered the band. They cheered Eddie Sutton. They cheered each other. They cheered the team. The team members cheered back. It was a thing of beauty! They were all one rockin' family – coach, players, band, bandleader, student body – and they were unbeatable! Each fan felt as important as the center, as the coach, as the band. That's TEAMWORK.

Think about it. If any one factor failed to function correctly in all of this, if one fan had stepped in the way of that bandleader as he sprinted around the top of Barnhill in celebration of that score, if he had tripped, if he had stopped, the momentum of that entire game would have crashed down around their ears. But, in that glorious snapshot of time, all other disagreements, trials and tribulations the student body, faculty and team might

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have had seemed swept aside on those unforgettable evenings when everyone was **equal** and everyone was a vital part of that functioning TEAM.

However, with the advent of little league sports, and structured sporting events and tournaments for children, beginning before they can even physically support all the equipment their parents put them in, some, if not a good portion, of that brand of teamwork has ceased to exist.

So, why does sandlot vs. little league make a difference? There are several notions a child forms from structured sports that are different from how their fathers and grandfathers learned “the rule of the team” at the sandlot.

For instance, many times little league players might not even know the other children on their team, only seeing them when they get to the field.

They can't know their talents and whether they can count on them in a pinch, or if they need help in a particular game.

And, many times a little league team is all about the uniforms and the fields that are built for them to play on. The players (or at least the parents) are swayed by the sponsorship of the team. They also feel they can interfere with the referee's decisions, the positions their child plays, and other aspects of the game any time they see fit.

And, most importantly, the children have no say in the decisions being made for them. They are pawns in their parents' game.

Very seldom is a little league player **HEARD**, or their input **CONSIDERED**. Therefore, they cannot be **COMMITTED** to the welfare of the

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team they are on. They can feel no **RESPONSIBILITY** for their own actions and no **ACCOUNTABILITY** for the outcome of the team effort.

In most cases, it is all about the individual child who is all suited out in uniforms so cumbersome that they can hardly walk, much less play with any degree of joy or excitement in the game.

In many cases, children have no opportunity to learn “the rule of the team” from his peers in neighborhood games. If they don’t have the opportunity to choose to put real TEAMWORK into practice as a child, see its benefits, and feel the surge of importance it gives them to be equally responsible for the success of the team they are on -- whatever team that might be at the time, it is easy to

see how, as adults in the corporate world, they will have a difficult time practicing teamwork on the job.

## **How I Learned Teamwork in Prison**

I figured that a heading like that would probably keep you reading this section! No, I have never actually been sentenced to prison or confined against my will, but I have been in prison settings many times. It was those episodes, and particularly one, that taught me more about teamwork than anything in my executive business experience.

Athletic Ministries International, headed by a wonderful friend named Dennis Cantrell, is an international prison ministry based in Memphis, Tennessee, and is known around the world for its work helping men in prison to gain perspective and hope in their lives. The program consists of a number of tools, but their most famous is their

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basketball team, Spirit Express. For nearly twenty years AMI has gathered together some of the best college alumni basketball players, many who have had some success in professional basketball around the world, all who are talented and wonderfully gifted athletes. They contract for a season or two traveling, around the globe, playing basketball, particularly in U.S. prisons and working with prisoners in an effort to help them gain hope and a new perspective of their lives.

Each year as the schedule was set, we would hear from a few prison directors who believed they had an unusually good team of athletes and were looking forward to being the first team to dethrone the undefeated Spirit Express and stop their domination over the prison teams. Although we had heard this numerous times from other prison directors, it hadn't happened yet, but this could be the first time. I always remember the apprehension

we felt going into a prison not knowing if this situation would be like all the others or, in this case, it might not work as well as it had in the past.

Each time we approached a prison, I was like the other members of the team, quiet, focused and caught in my own thoughts about just how thankful I was to be able to come and go all in the same day, but yet at the same time with a sense of uneasiness about our role in spending time with these men, listening to their stories describing the wreck they had made of their lives and the lives of their victims. As was routine, when we cleared security to enter the prison we were escorted to the dining room where we would join the prisoners for the first time to have dinner and visit with them. Then, later that evening, the entire prison population, or those who were allowed, would meet in the prison gym for what would be the entertainment highlight of their

month as the prison team took on the famous, undefeated, Spirit Express basketball team.

We had learned over the years that most of these prison basketball teams had a few good athletes, but usually there was enough dissention, miscommunication, lack of support, and other detrimental issues to cause their team to look more like a collection of individuals than a team. However, the reputation of this particular prison team was that they had some very high caliber athletes that, if things had been different, could have been gifted college or professional players. We knew this time we had our work cut out for us. They had been looking forward to this event for quite some time. I can remember as the warm-ups took place, the prison crowd was buzzing with excitement, and you can imagine there was quite a bit of banter from the crowd as we prepared.

One of the most interesting nuances of playing against prison basketball teams is that they bring their own refs. The referees are other inmates within the prison, and while they don't always have the best grasp of the rules, it is generally a position of honor to earn the role of referee as they are considered the most trustworthy and dependable. However, we always knew that we had to beat not only the other team, but also the refs as well – no excuses.

The game began like most of them, very spirited. The prison team certainly showed a lot of individual talent and ability and even flashes of teamwork. When the game remained close for the better part of the first half with baskets being swapped and the anticipation building, I began to think perhaps this could be the first team to actually give the Spirit Express not only a close game, but a defeat. And while this game, like all the others, was

played with a great deal of intensity, toward the end of the first half we began thinking about the half-time program where we would put our warm-ups back on, go out on the court, and speak to the prison population about personal and spiritual issues that we felt could be beneficial for them to hear. Granted, this was an unusual half-time program, not like the ones we see at professional and college games today with young dance teams. As our minds wandered from the game to our program a few minutes before half time, I saw the very first signs of a break in what was soon to be a total loss of their teamwork.

One of our Spirit Express players, a large, powerful man who had been a three-year starter at the University of Arkansas as a power forward, came down with a rebound only minutes before the half. As he turned to make the outlet pass, his elbow caught one of the prison players right in the center

of the forehead, and just like David flailing Goliath, the prison player was out on the floor, cold, knocked out. This had never happened before and we didn't know what to expect, but as we gathered around him in great concern (and honestly, I was equally concerned for us as well as the fallen player), I witnessed a most unusual event unfold in front of us. While our team seemed to have a great deal of concern about this player, his own teammates seemed to have very little. In fact, while we were attempting to revive the player, almost in a comical manner we watched as some of the fans at the behest of their coach, jauntily and forthrightly walked onto the gym floor, grabbed the unconscious player by his arms and unceremoniously dragged him off the court with his heels bouncing along the floor as the crowd cheered. They dragged him into a room about the size of a large closet that served as a dressing room, and without so much as a mention, the game continued uneventful until half time.

This event suggested to me that the glimmer of teamwork I had sensed earlier in the game might not be as solid as I had suspected, and as we began to pull away slightly before half-time with an eleven point lead, it was becoming obvious that there were some teamwork issues beginning to creep in that always ultimately failed all prison team efforts. Although they had great talent, abilities and enthusiasm, in every case we noticed the same things affected the prison teams and ultimately caused their defeat ... and it had everything to do with teamwork.

### ***TEAMWORK Problem #1***

#### ***Everyone Needs to be HEARD***

We noticed when the prison team huddled during a time-out, rather than listening to their coach, they would all begin speaking simultaneously

in a sense of exasperation, and generally there was one guy who seemed to have the “authority” to tell the others what should be done. Whether he was right or not, he was the one who was **HEARD** the most. In teamwork, when the one with the power believes he is the one with all the knowledge, you’ve got a problem.

### ***TEAMWORK Problem #2***

#### ***Everyone Must Be CONSIDERED***

It was a “survival of the fittest” mentality. I am certain in prison populations, like many corporations, position and past success often determine whose ideas and suggestions will be **CONSIDERED**. The prison team was not able to appreciate or consider the contributions of the coach or those around them who might be able to give them a strategy and plan for how to beat us.

### ***TEAMWORK Problem #3***

#### ***No COMMITMENT to the Team***

The grand offensive scheme for every prison team we ever played simply could be summarized in one sentence, **“The one who brings the ball up the court, shoots!”** There wasn’t a **COMMITMENT** about winning the game nearly as much as there was a **COMMITMENT** to their individual statistics.

### ***TEAMWORK Problem #4***

#### ***No RESPONSIBILITY***

We saw over and over again that if the prison team got behind, two or three of the team members generally would not feel **COMMITTED** to play defense, and as a result, their lack of

**RESPONSIBILITY** to their role diminished the chances of their team working well.

### **TEAMWORK Problem #5**

#### **No ACCOUNTABILITY**

Once they fell behind, there was always a lot of blaming and finger pointing. There was no **ACCOUNTABILITY** for the other team members or focus on the goal. While there were a lot of excuses and blaming, the end result was that no **ACCOUNTABILITY** meant certain defeat.

While I never heard the fate of their team member who was knocked unconscious, given the lop-sided win that night and the conduct of their team, there is a good chance he might still be lying on the floor in that dressing room waiting for someone to revive him.

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# **TEAMWORK**

## **PART III**

### **TAKING ACTION**

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# OBSERVING YOUR TEAM

**As team leader you have two main jobs:**

1. To select a workable team, and
2. To keep that team functioning as a team.

As team leader you can ensure the success of your team by simply stepping back and observing the behavior of each member. Assured team members will exhibit certain behavior, which a team leader can monitor as evidence that they are confident of the agenda of the other members, that they are relaxed and able to concentrate on their own contribution to the team.

**ASSURED** team members will exhibit signs of being relaxed and of belonging, such as camaraderie, interest in the project and in each other,

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trust of their team partners, and focus on, and excitement about, a project.

When the members of a team have ***THE FIVE ASSURANCES***, they will be focusing on the efforts of the team as a whole and can concentrate their energy to give the team and the project their best. They will understand and be comfortable with the other members of the team, the team process, and any team decisions that impact their department.

TEAMWORK is contagious. You can have ***THE FIVE ASSURANCES*** only when you feel that all other members of your team are functioning as if they have those assurances. And they can have those assurances only when you, yourself, are demonstrating them.

## ***THE FIVE ASSURANCES***

of a Functioning TEAM are:

1. That you are equally ***HEARD***,
2. That your needs are equally ***CONSIDERED***,
3. That all others are equally ***COMMITTED*** to the project,
4. That all others feel equally ***RESPONSIBLE*** for their role in the outcome of the project,
5. That all others feel equally ***ACCOUNTABLE*** for the success of the entire project and of the company.

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## WHAT A FUNCTIONING TEAM LOOKS LIKE

If your team is fully functioning, each member will feel comfortable with and close to each of the other members of the team. They will show the following unmistakable signs:

- Easy-going “friendliness” among members,
- Random “how are things going” visits to other departments,
- Relaxed participation in meetings,
- Enthusiasm about goals or decisions,
- Comfortable acceptance of decisions that affect their department or resources,
- Continued adherence to standards decided on at meetings,
- Camaraderie and out-of-the-office contact between members,
- Feelings of security about their territory or “turf”,

- Automatic mentoring of newer members,
- Holding other department heads to their commitment,
- Viewing their department's role in the context of the entire company,
- Feeling comfortable if team members need to "hash out" a few things to get their point across,
- Giving support to other members who might be experiencing some conflicting office or personal problems at the time,
- Showing interest in the results of a project, not just in the role of their department,
- Willingness to share their problems as well as their visions with other members,
- Unwillingness to 'settle" for what they can get, instead of making their needs known,

- Sure that if they call someone's attention to unsatisfactory work or slacking off, it will not be used against them,
- Listening to other TEAM members in order to understand what they are saying, not to defend or dispute what they say,
- Feeling a total trust in the abilities, agendas, and motives of every other TEAM member,
- Sure that if they are asked to give an inch on this project, they will not automatically be expected to give a mile on the next one.

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## WHERE FROM HERE?

The actions of an **ASSURED TEAM** can be the dynamic driving force of any corporation. On the other hand, an unASSURED or dysfunctional team can slow or stop any growth or progress you envision for the future. If your people aren't working as a TEAM, your company can't go forward with the momentum and ease with which it could progress if they were.

A team leader's ability to correctly choose the persons that will constitute the corporate group, and mold them into a team, and monitor the team for signs of **ASSURANCE** will allow the company to go forward unhindered by in-house stumbling blocks – **CORPORATE DRAG**.

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We urge you to make a concentrated effort to institute what you have learned from this book. Work with your people to give them ***THE FIVE ASSURANCES*** that teamwork is based upon. Remember, when any member of your team loses sight of the purpose of the team, and the ***EQUAL STATUS*** of each team member, he or she becomes a detriment to the team. As team leader, you must work with them to either help them back into line – or replace them. **It's just that simple!**

The Edmundson Northstar Companies can assist you to build a winning team by providing a coach trained in these principles who will help you as you help your TEAM.

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Below is the questionnaire mentioned in the beginning of this book on page *v*. entitled “Before You Begin”. Check any of the statements below that reflect what you feel. Then, refer back when you have completed this book to see how your ideas have changed.

- 1. In most of the group meetings I have been part of, the outcome is pretty well decided beforehand, and so I don't feel comfortable with bringing anything else up.
- 2. Typically, most “meetings” are just a time for a few of the members to tell the others what they are going to do.
- 3. I have found it very difficult to contribute to group discussions.
- 4. My department is so small; I generally just get what's left of the budget.

*Cont*

- 5. I'm new to the company and feel those who have been here longer know more of what is best for the company.
- 6. It always seems to be a waste of time to hear everyone's petty views and problems with their department.
- 7. Group meetings are for deciding the big issues, not for airing all the various needs of department heads.
- 8. Some departments need to be budgeted first, because of their importance to the company.
- 9. Some departments have to make do with what's left of the budget after the larger, more important guys are taken care of.
- 10. Sometime I think some of my colleagues overstate the needs of their departments to get more of the budget.

*Cont*

- ❑ 11. Some of the group members never seem to be on the same “page” as I am.
- ❑ 12. I have to think of my department first and fight for what I need to go forward.
- ❑ 13. I can’t depend on a “fair shake” if I don’t present my case forcefully and with no compromise at group meetings.
- ❑ 14. I don’t like to participate in birthdays and “occasion” parties and such at the office.
- ❑ 15. Some of the group members don’t seem to think my department is necessary for the company to function.
- ❑ 16. I know how it is. Group meetings are just a formality. Everything is decided at the water cooler or at some lunch meeting.
- ❑ 17. I typically just accept what the CEO decides and try to make do with it.

*Cont*

- 18. I usually try to be a team player, but only if it doesn't seem to interfere too much with what I want or need for my department.
- 19. I'll only go so far with a compromise – but, if it seems to start taking over some of my turf, I balk.
- 20. If I don't agree with the decisions made at a group meeting, I don't make a big fuss; I just do what's the best for my department.
- 21. I think there is a seniority system that should permeate group meetings, with those who have more seniority in the company having more floor time.
- 22. I'm uncomfortable with someone at work trying to “get to know” me.
- 23. I sometimes feel like an outsider in meetings.

*Cont*

- 24. I feel like I've earned my wings, I don't want to show new people the ropes – they can learn the hard way, like I did.
- 25. Most of the other department managers have no idea how difficult it is to run my department.
- 26. I feel that I get very little respect from my colleagues.
- 27. If another department manager can't do his work, well, it's not my problem.
- 28. Those who play golf with the bosses or go for coffee with them have their ear.
- 29. Once you start giving an inch, you'll probably be asked to give a mile.
- 30. I don't like to attend annual banquets and "family" picnics and such. I don't know those people.

*Cont*

- 31. I think my job is to run my part of the business. Other people can take care of themselves.



This is the end of the questionnaire mentioned on page *v*. This book is designed to refocus your thinking about teamwork. So, before you began to read, I thought it might be helpful to record your thoughts on teamwork, your feelings about working with a group, and the experiences you had in the past and, therefore, how you felt about working as part of a team at that moment. To make a snapshot, as it were, of you at that time to be used as a reference when your feelings changed about what **TEAMWORK** and **THE FIVE ASSURANCES** mean in your life.

## Key To Exercise on Page 56

On page 56 of this book you were asked to indicate the frequency with which you have certain feelings or thoughts by placing a number value in a box beside each of 25 statements and phrases. The exercise is not designed to record how you feel toward another member of the team, but rather, how you feel inside – how **ASSURED** you are. The purpose of the exercise is to aid you in discovering how you feel you fit in with the group or team with which you are associated.

**Scoring:** Now, if you will record the number you chose to write beside each statement of the exercise in the corresponding gray-colored box in the table on the following page, then total each column, it will guide you to which **ASSURANCES** you are lacking in your teamwork.

Statement	H	CN	CM	R	A
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
Total					

Your totals for each of these columns can range from 0 to 25. A score of zero “0” in any one column indicates that you are perfectly happy and comfortable with that aspect of the team or group you are working with at this moment. If you have any score over zero “0” in any column, the larger your score, the more difficulty and discomfort you are probably experiencing while working with a group. Here’s what your column totals might be telling you:

<b>Your score range</b>	<b>Degree of difficulty functioning within a group</b>
One through five	Slight dismay with some aspects of your group
Six through nine	Some misgivings with how you fit in the group
Ten and over	Should alert you that you are having marked difficulty

If you have any total (over zero) in the column under the letter “H” you might be having the feeling that you aren’t being equally **HEARD** by your team.

If you have any score under the letters “CN” it is because you think your needs, wants and input are not being thoroughly **CONSIDERED** within the scope of the team projects.

A score under the letters “CM” is designed to reflect a discomfort with others’ lack of **COMMITMENT** to chosen projects and goals.

Any score under the letter “R” indicates that you feel that others on your team are showing less **RESPONSIBILITY** for their own performance or production in a certain project or projects.

If you have any score under the letter “A” it may be because you are uncomfortable with the degree of **ACCOUNTABILITY** to the success of team projects shown by a team member or the team as a whole.

After you have completed reading this book, it might be helpful if you reflect back and try to pinpoint the specific events or feelings you experienced when you first noticed your discomfort. If you do not have the **ASSURANCE** that you are equally **HEARD**, that your needs are equally **CONSIDERED**, that others are equally **COMMITTED** to the project, that others feel equally **RESPONSIBLE** for their role in the outcome of the project, and that others feel equally **ACCOUNTABLE** for the success of the entire project and for the company, you are a member of a dysfunctional team. When you first identify these

feelings is the time to assess your role within a group and your future with that group.

If you are a team member and feel that you are lacking any of ***THE FIVE ASSURANCES***, speak with your team leader or supervisor about these things. If you are a team leader, be on the lookout for the comfort level of each of your team members as well as your own. If one person on a team shows any discomfort with the project, the process, or any decisions that will affect them or their department, the team cannot function.

A team is only a team when it is functioning – when each member experiences no feelings of discomfort -- when each member has

***THE FIVE ASSURANCES.***